



**EAST OTERO SCHOOL DISTRICT R-1**  
301 RATON AVENUE  
LA JUNTA, COLORADO 81050

**BOARD WRAP-UP**

**Board of Education Meeting**

**April 12, 2021**

1. **ROLL CALL** – Ayala, Backes, Bickel, Derbigny and Leyba.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **STAR LEADERSHIP CLASS PRESENTATION**

Mr. Bill Schmidt, STAR (Students Taking an Active Role) Leadership Class teacher, explained he is trying to get started a Jr. ROTC Cadet Corp within the next couple of years and the first steps of this is the STAR program. The STAR students who attended the meeting were: Paul Hanson, Ethan Leyba, Princeton Johnson, Royal DeIDuca-Lowry, and Jaydon Rivas-Gallegos. The students recited the cadet creed. Mr. Schmidt had the students inform the Board what the STAR program has brought to each of them, with leadership being at the top of the list. Mr. Schmidt said there are currently 25 students enrolled in the class.

4. **TTA STUDENT PRESENTATION**

Recently, Tiger Trades Academy (TTA) students virtually attended space day at the capital. They originally planned on a video presentation for the Board, but had technical difficulties. Students Brandon Martinez and Matthias Inguito instead shared with the Board an update of the neat stuff happening at TTA. Brandon explained he is building a computer and is working on software design. Matthias shared he is working on a Martian greenhouse project with mentors from NASA and Lockheed-Martin, which is a fun opportunity. The shop class is working on building a shed, which includes plumbing and electrical training. The students invited the Board to stop by TTA and check out their projects.

5. **OJC THEATRE ARTS FESTIVAL WINNERS**

Austin Kurtz, Isadora Clark and Willow Johnston won 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places respectively for their monologue performance at the OJC Theater Arts Festival. For the short scene category, Austin Kurtz, Isadora Clark and Elizabeth Hanson placed 3<sup>rd</sup> for “The Witches”. Austin Kurtz was the recipient of the OJC Theatre Arts Scholarship. The festival was held March 30 through April 1, 2021. The Board congratulated all of the students. The students gave a short impromptu performance of “The Witches”. The Board congratulated all of the students.

6. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA – AGENDA APPROVED AS PRESENTED**

2. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- **Jarrod Manick - New Hire as Physical Education Teacher at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year**

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

**F. Agenda Item Deleted (Approve Purchase of New Convection Oven). Item approved for purchase in kitchen package presented on the March agenda.**

**G. Approve Purchase of Tractor**

**H. Approve Purchase of Wonders 2020 Reading Curriculum**

**I. Approve Plumbing Costs for Bus Barn**

7. **CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVED CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED**

A. **Personnel Approval**

- Morgan Sutton - Resignation as Kindergarten Teacher at the Primary School effective May 28, 2021
- Kelli Kenner - New Hire as Teacher at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year
- Tori Harris - Resignation as Secretary at the Primary School effective April 2, 2021
- Rebecca Miner - Resignation as ELA Teacher at the Junior/Senior High School effective May 28, 2021
- Cayla Proctor - Resignation as 3rd Grade Teacher at the Intermediate School effective May 28, 2021
- Richard David Mejia - New Hire as Skills for Success Teacher and Head Girls Basketball Coach for the 2021-2022 school year

## **BOARD WRAP UP – April 12, 2021**

### **Page | 2**

- Stephen Matthews - New Hire as ELA Teacher and Theater/Drama Director at the Junior/Senior High School for the 2021-2022 school year
- Shayla Brown - New Hire as Kindergarten Teacher at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year
- Jarrod Manick – New Hire as Physical Education Teacher at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year

#### **8. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Merinda Reisch, Business Manager, said the financial reports were attached to the agenda and with the expenses and income, the books show \$9,322.00 to the black for the month. **FINANCIAL REPORT APPROVED AS PRESENTED**

#### **9. MINUTES**

Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on March 8, 2021. **APPROVED AS PRINTED**

#### **10. AUDITOR'S REPORT**

Gary Waller, Auditor of Dixon, Waller and Company, explained the results of the district's 2019-2020 audit. Mr. Waller reported that the report was given a clean opinion.

Mr. Waller suggested to the Board that the district maintain records and provide them to the auditor on a current basis so the auditor's report can be presented in a timelier fashion. He said he understands last year was a difficult year.

Director Leyba asked Mr. Waller if he has any concerns related to internal weaknesses or errors in the internal controls. Mr. Waller said there is a limited number of people conducting financial transactions. He explained it is difficult in smaller districts to employ a separate person in each area of the business office, which is the ideal setup. In this setup the business manager provides the check and balance. Mr. Waller said what his firm does when auditing a smaller district is obtain a report from CDE which lists all the district's revenues and they account for those revenues. He said they look at the payroll journals and direct deposits can be problematic, as it is quite easy to mix up employees and bank account numbers. They also look at all disbursements, as well as lags on deposits. Mr. Waller recommended financial records need to be reconciled and posted on a current basis, and if they are not it can lead to large differences in balances. This is something the district needs to improve on and it is getting better, but it is something that is very important because the financial information that you get is predicated off of these reports. A limited number of staff makes this difficult and the staff that is in place have to be qualified.

Director Leyba asked Mr. Waller if he has any concerns regarding the integrity or confidence within the district's financial operations. He said he always likes to see things done exactly correct and shared auditors are supposed to come in, pick up your records and give you an opinion as to whether the records are correctly stated or they're not. He said as a firm they have taken a position that they will offer assistance and help in suggesting various adjusting entries that need to be made. He said there were some large adjustments that needed to be made that his firm suggested and that were made. He said he would like to not do that especially in a district this size, but feels that it is necessary in order to conduct and get the audit to this point. He also said they have to be careful to not have a conflict of interest. Director Leyba asked if some of those large adjustments had to do with not being able to delete an account in the bookkeeping software system. Mr. Waller said some of the problems are system driven, some are understanding the system and how to work with it and some is contacting the system help and not getting a quick response. Mr. Waller did state changing software programs should be a last resort as it is time consuming and can take two years to get back to where you were.

Director Leyba asked if Mr. Waller had specific recommendations for the financial department. He said one of the primary concerns is reconciliations, and books and banks have to be reconciled on a monthly basis. He said with a multi-fund operation with a pooled account, it is very easy to make a one-sided entry (one side to the general fund and one side to the capital reserve/capital projects fund; when that happens both funds are out of balance; if that happens several times during the year, the reconciliation of getting the funds to balance takes a lot of time). Mr. Waller suggested Superintendent Lovato review financial records as a cross-check.

Director Backes asked if the Board should be looking at something else besides the month-to-month financial report they receive. Mr. Waller said reports can be detailed or summarized and it depends on what the Board wishes to see. He stated cash, fund equity, major revenues and expenditures will give the Board a good idea of

what is going on. The financial report the Board gets could include if the district is over or under the budget. A detailed budget comparison report which shows details of actual expense to budget expense would be a good report. Salaries and benefits are 70-80% of the budget. The Board could also look monthly at the percentage of the budget that is being consumed.

Director Ayala asked if the district is having any issues with direct deposits since it was mentioned. Mr. Waller said there are no problems with this.

Director Backes asked Mr. Waller if there is a timeline involved with his recommendations. He stated the auditor can't set timelines as that is a management issue, but he would like to see the activities that are feasible to be implemented by the time he returns. He said the major recommendations need to be completed and put in place.

Director Ayala wanted to know if reconciliations aren't being done on a monthly basis, how many have been completed. Mr. Waller stated last year was difficult because of Covid so it is hard to judge. He said the general ledger should balance every month and the fund balance should balance every month as well. He also explained theoretically every miscoding is a violation of state law.

Mr. Waller ended by stating he appreciates the help of the staff in completing the audit and thanked them.

No action was needed or taken.

## **11. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Lovato informed the Board the manufacturer will hopefully be here the first week in June to begin the swimming pool repairs and plans are for the pool to reopen on July 1. He said the fee schedule will be looked at and updated. In the meantime, Mr. Farra is fixing odds and ends. There were some minor issues and those have been fixed. The deck is being looked at as well. Mr. Miell is looking at the mechanical side and the things that aren't involved with the filtering system so that basically when the manufacturer comes in we are ready to go. It will take probably two weeks once everything is fixed to get the pool refilled to temperature and the chemicals balanced.

The freezers in the bus barn are in need of new compressors. They have set for quite some time and the insurance has agreed for this repair to be an allowable cost.

Superintendent Lovato shared some highlights of the Meet and Confer follow up.

- *Service toward Recertification* - service toward recertification is not realistic to lobby to CDE for. The district is generous with in-house opportunities.
- *Staff Mental/Physical Health* - Superintendent Lovato hoped everyone has been able to visit the staff gym and said he is still working on the mental health agreements.
- *Accrued Discretionary Days* – this policy will be looked at for next year.
- *Staff Salary/Recruitment* – the district is looking at being more attractive. Superintendent Lovato said we are trying to get out to actual job fairs, but believes they are all still virtual. Regarding the salary schedule, we are very competitive locally. The smaller districts can't afford to pay as much and staff have to work harder.
- *Staff Communication* – Superintendent Lovato has tried to give a heads up when he is going online.
- *Meet and Confer Accountability* - Superintendent Lovato informed the Board he emailed the follow up to all staff and didn't receive any responses. Director Derbigny commented that the salaries are comparative, but are still low. She asked if it is possible to offer a sign on bonus. Superintendent Lovato said it is possible but is difficult to budget for. He said the district helps some new hires with alternative licensure and exchange visas. Director Bickel recalls discussion about giving a gift to newly hired staff, which created existing staff feeling left out. Director Derbigny says she agrees with equality but said these are times we haven't had before and things might have to be a little different. Director Ayala said she remembers staff telling the Board that 70% of our teachers have Master's degrees. She suggested launching a social media campaign to promote our staff and give them the recognition they deserve. She would like to have a photo of all of our teachers on the district website. These ideas won't cost any money but might make the staff feel good. Director Leyba suggested adding teacher recognition to the Board agenda. Director Bickel said the same recognition should be given to paraprofessionals who are in the process of obtaining their teaching degree. Director Ayala said she would also like to see new staff welcomed and recognized via social media. She feels this might make others want to work here. She reiterated that if the district had the money it would be given to them.

## **BOARD WRAP UP – April 12, 2021**

### **Page | 4**

- *TTA Onsite Counselor* – there will be a counselor at TTA.
- *Classified Pay Scale* – this has to get better and will be worked on.
- *Technology* – this is an annual commitment to refurbish/replenish computers
- *Art Supplies* – a small grant has been received to install a kiln at TTA, however, this is a big project.
- *Restore Green House* – this is on the list for both TTA and the Jr/Sr High School

The Junior/Senior High School is looking at realigning graduation requirements to allow more flexibility and TTA is not a school for wayward kids, but a school for kids who want a different path. Superintendent Lovato would like to put videos together to showcase this.

The Retirement/Recognition reception is April 30 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Director Ayala asked if a regular graduation is being planned. Superintendent Lovato said it is and our local health agency will determine what needs to be enforced. She also asked if a prom was going to take place and Superintendent Lovato said it is scheduled for April 24.

CMAS testing has begun. Superintendent Lovato said there are many opt outs and a few opt ins. Director Derbigny asked how things are working with the opt outs and opt ins. Superintendent Lovato said once there is a list and most likely, if students have opted out of testing, parents will be asked to keep their students at home that day. Director Leyba asked what happens if students come to school anyway. Superintendent Lovato said they probably would have study hall. This year, there is only one day of testing and one content area. The opt ins will have to have a separate schedule.

## **12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Update (Lovato) **NO ACTION TAKEN**

## **13. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Declare a Critical Shortage (Lovato) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- b. Approve Chartwells Contract (Lovato) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- c. Approve 2021-2022 Calendar Revisions (Lovato) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- d. Approve Freezer Repair Parts (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$17,185.55 AS PRESENTED**
- e. Approve Track Cleaning and Re-Striping (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16,000.00 AS PRESENTED**
- f. Approve New Auditorium Lighting for the Jr/Sr High (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$176,801.00 AS PRESENTED**
- g. Approve Purchase of Tractor (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$21,140.00 AS PRESENTED**
- h. Approve Purchase of Wonders 2020 Reading Curriculum (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$238,474.76 AS PRESENTED**
- i. Approve Plumbing Costs for Bus Barn (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$48,750.00 AS PRESENTED**
- j. Approve Revised Policy KB on First/Revised Reading (Lovato) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- k. Approve Administrative Staff Employment Renewals – Resolution 2021-2 (Lovato) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- l. Approve Certified Staff Employment Renewals – Resolution 2021-3N and Resolution 2021-3P (Lovato) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- m. Approve Non-Renewal Employment Resolution (Lovato) **FOLLOWING SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS, THE BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO NOT RE-EMPLOY ONE CERTIFIED STAFF MEMBER FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR.**
- n. Executive Session regarding student discipline per C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4)(h). **ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:27 P.M. MEETING RECONVENED AT 8:38 P.M.**

## **14. BOARD COMMENTS**

- ✓ Director Ayala said she is happy to have people coming back to Board meetings and sharing things with the Board.
- ✓ Director Backes said she agrees with Director Ayala's statement 100%. She also said regarding the budget, spending, and capital improvements, we are watching the next fiscal year will likely be concentrating on doing those salary increases for our paras and this is very much a part of what we want to have for next year, but these were projects that were preplanned in capital improvements or insurance related.

**BOARD WRAP UP – April 12, 2021**

**Page | 5**

- ✓ Superintendent Lovato shared the S-CAP review is tomorrow and is disappointed it won't be an in person review as it is a lot more work to prepare for the virtual review. He said we will see what that feedback yields us after tomorrow. Director Ayala asked if that takes away the rawness of it if we have to prepare what we show them. Superintendent Lovato said no, the most influential pieces have been better because it is very focused on what is being looked for. What is missed is the observations where interaction occurs. The discussions that happen from school to school have been pretty rich. Superintendent Lovato said he is looking forward to that, but you don't get that feel. When climate and culture is one of your priority areas, that's really tough to view in a video. Director Leyba asked how the student focus group was selected. Superintendent Lovato said he isn't sure, as each building did their own.

**15. ADJOURNMENT – MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:41 p.m.**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

*DEE LEYBA, President*      *KRISTIN BICKEL, Vice President*  
*KIDRON BACKES, Secretary/Treasurer*      *ANGELA AYALA, Director*  
*DARLENE DERBIGNY, Director*